Geffery Mayor.

Martis xii° *die Octobris*, 1686. *Annoq*; *RR. Jacobi Secundi Angl. &c. Secundo.*

THis Court doth desire Mr. *Newcome* to print his Sermon preached at *Guildhall*-Chappel on Sunday Morning last, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.

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Peccata in Deliciis.

A Discourse of Bosom Sins.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORD MAYOR

And Court of Aldermen,

A T

Guild-Hall Chappel, *October* the 10*th*, 1686.

By PETER NEWCOME, M. A.

And Vicar of *Aldenham* in *Hertfordshire.*

LONDON:

Printed by *J. D.* for *Jonathan Robinson*, at the Golden Lion in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1686.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir Robert Geffery,

Lord Mayor of the City of *London*,

And to the

Court of ALDERMEN.

My Lord,

IN Obedience to your Lordship's particular Desire, as well as the publick Order from the Court to me, I here present you from the Press, what your Lordship was pleased so much to favour with your liking from the Pulpit.

The Discourse is rustick, plain, and purely practical; and was design'd, not so much to work the Head, or tickle the Fancy, as to affect

affect the Heart, and reform the Life to a real and univerſal Uprightneſs before God; *which end if it anſwer, I am not at all ſollicitous how it may fare in other reſpects.*

That the Bleſſing of God may attend both it, and the Government of this City, is the hearty Prayer of,

Right Honourable,

Your moſt humble,

and moſt obedient Servant,

PETER NEWCOME.

A Sermon preach'd before the Lord Mayor at *Guild-hall Chappel.*

Psal. 18. 23.

I was also upright before him, and I kept my self from Mine *Iniquity.*

Order and Method, in Spirituals as in Temporals, is the Life of Action; that which facilitates and succeeds our Enterprize, rendring it both pleasant and profitable to us. We might certainly become much better Men, and much sooner too, did we but begin at the right end, and proceed regularly in a good way. A neglect whereof doubles our Task, and disappoints mightily our Labour. This therefore is of vast consequence for us all to learn, (even the best and shortest way to be Good) which the Words before us may instruct us in; as declaring not only an Evidence of the *Psalmist's Uprightness*, but intimating also the successful Method of his attaining thereto; which was by *keeping himself from his Iniquity*; *I was also upright*, says he, *before him, and I kept my self from mine Iniquity.*

A

A due Abſtinence from our Own Iniquity, as it is the Effect, ſo it is a certain Cauſe of a Religious Uprightneſs before God.

The firſt ſtep, or likelieſt method to become effectually Good, is diligently to keep our ſelves from our Own Sin.

This *Poſition* as the words afford us, ſo ſhall I endeavour to illuſtrate, by briefly inſiſting on the following Particulars.

1. Firſt of all, I ſhall ſhew what is here meant by a Man's *Own* Iniquity.
2. Secondly; Whence it is that ſome Sin more peculiarly becomes ſo.
3. Thirdly; How this may be diſcover'd and diſtinguiſh'd by us from all other Sins. And then,
4. Laſtly; The neceſſity of *keeping our ſelves from ſuch Sins* eſpecially, in order to our becoming *Upright before God.*

The firſt of theſe I begin with; which is,

I. *To explain what we are here to underſtand by a Man's Own Iniquity:* Becauſe every Man, 'tis evident, ſince that firſt fatal laps from Human Innocency, do's remain a bruiſed and corrupted Being; having a Principle of Vice within, which do's ſtrongly encline to *all* Sin: So that what ever Enormity we at any time ſtand guilty of, it may moſt properly be termed *our Own*; it proceeding from our *own* Choice and depraved Inclination; nor can any thing but himſelf challenge a Propriety therein. But even yet, *All* Sin is not in the ſame degree

degree apparently *his*. Every Crime cannot claim an Equal Intereſt in him. The Appetite of the *Old Man* is not without its Longings too; diſcovering a greater luſt after ſome Food more than others; never moving with an equal pace towards every Sin. Some it craves after with a greater thirſt, purſues it with more eagerneſs, and ſwallows it with more delight and guſt than it does others. Some it ſingles out and makes ſpecial choice of to follow and prey upon with the moſt earneſt Delight and ſenſual Sweetneſs: Hereby owning it more peculiarly his *own*; the Sin which he chiefly reſpects, to which he moſt ordinarily conforms himſelf, and is moſt converſant in; and to which therefore he makes all Occaſions and Circumſtances, Friends and Acquaintance, Religion and Conſcience; all the Powers both of Soul and Body, and outward Eſtate, tributary and ſubſervient. Thus in the Body of Sin, as in the Body Natural, there is ever ſome one prevailing Humour which ſhews it ſelf, and lords it or'e the reſt. And therefore, as good Men, tho they have the ſeed of every Grace in them, yet ſome *one* may be be ſaid to be *their*'s in an eminent manner above the reſt (as *Abraham* was eminent for Obedience, *Moſes* for Meekneſs, *Job* for Patience). So wicked Men, tho they have the ſeed of every Sin in them, (*Jews and Gentiles being all under Sin*, as the *Apoſtle* argues, *Rom.* 3. 9. *i. e.* all alike corrupt by Nature) yet does not this Corruption operate alike in all Bodies; but in every particular Perſon it vents it ſelf in one way rather than another. Whence it is that we find alſo wicked Men marked out in Scripture for their ſeveral Sins; *Cain* for his Murder, *Simeon* and *Levi* for their Treachery, *Corah* and his Company for their Rebellion, *Nebuchadnezzar*

for his Pride, *Manaſſes* for his Cruelty, *Balaam* for his Covetouſneſs. Some vicious Humour or other ever gets the predominancy in all Conſtitutions. Every Man hath his *Peccatum in deliciis*, ſome ſweet Morſel which he roles under his Tongue and is loth to ſpit out. Even as in every Man's Body there is a ſeed and principle of Death, yet in ſome there is a proneneſs to one kind of Diſeaſe more than to another; ſo, tho in every Man's Soul there is (naturally) the ſeed and principle of every Sin, yet hath every Man his Inclination to one kind rather than another; and this is that which we are here to underſtand by *His* Iniquity; as being ſo in a more peculiar and eminent manner, ſo as no other Sin beſides it is. Conſider we therefore,

II. *Whence this comes to paſs*; From what Cauſe it proceeds that every Man thus ſingles out his particular Sin. This I conceive to be from one, or poſſibly all theſe following.

1. From the Natural Conſtitution and particular Complexion of Bodies.
2. From diſtinct and particular ways or manner of Education and Breeding.
3. From the preſent Age or ſeaſon of Life.
4. From particular Callings or Profeſſions of Life.
5. From the preſent Outward Eſtate or Condition. And,
6. Laſtly, From Cuſtom and long Uſage.

1. *The Natural Conſtitution and particular Complexion of Bodies, will be apt to incline Men to particular and ſuitable Sins.* For the different and various Humours, of

of which Human Conſtitution is compos'd, are ('tis evident even to common Experience) never in any Man mixt ſo equally but that one does abound; which (as it gives denomination to that Man's Complexion, ſo) like a ſtrong *Biaſs*, inclines the Affections to what delights and pleaſes moſtly it ſelf. Hence comes it that every Man is not alike inclined to every Sin; but this Man loves what another loaths. A Man of a dull and torpid Diſpoſition we obſerve to be ſeldom ambitious; and one of a quick and active Spirit as ſeldom idle. The Cholerick Man is not obnoxious to thoſe Evils which Melancholy does hatch; nor the Melancholy to thoſe which Choler is apt to ferment into. Every Humour is not nouriſhing to every Sin, nor can every Sin be fit entertainment for every Humour. Therefore not only do Men, according to their ſeveral Humours to be gratified, apply themſelves differently to the Body of Sin (Sin affording different Viands ſuitable to the Appetite to be feaſted, as the Plant does; whereon we may ſee the *Bee* feeding on the Flower, the *Bird* on the Seed, the *Sheep* on the Blade, and the *Swine* on the Root). But the Enemy likewiſe applies his Temptations, according to the Humour he is to allure; ſuiting his Weeds to the nature of the Soil he ſows upon; which is one Reaſon why they grow ſo rank, and increaſe ſo faſt.

Nor does it hence become any juſt Excuſe for the Sinner to ſay, for his Sin, *It's his Inclination to do thus and thus*; becauſe where Grace hath had its Work, all prevailing Inclination to that which is *Evil*, is turn'd a quite contrary way, even to *that which is Good*; and the predominant Humour, which before byaſs'd us to ſuch a darling Sin, being now regulated and refined,

ſtrongly inclines to its contrary Vertue. Hence this is called, moſt properly, *A Converſion,* becauſe the Change is ſo remarkable and mighty; making us quite other Men to what we were before, (of another Inclination and Diſpoſition): As good Phyſick, purging out all Depravity, and turning our loathing only to that which is really wholſome. So that it is no Excuſe for a ſick Man to vindicate the irregularity of his Appetite by, to ſay, *It is his Inclination*; ſince it is wholly owing to the Depravity of his Inclination, which aggravates his Crime, in that he neglects ſuch Medicines as might correct it. For do we think God will excuſe us, becauſe we ſin with an Appetite and ſtrong Inclination? Does not this rather inhaunce our Guilt (ſince *God hath ſhewn us what is good,* and woo'd us to accept it, and offer'd his Grace to *work* in us a *Will* thereto, and yet after all this) to *commit Sin with* Appetite and *greedineſs?*

If therefore it be our Conſtitution that hath endear'd any Sin to us, then is our Conſtitution ſtill unſanctified, and this is our own fault, and if not amended, will be our certain Damnation, but can never be our juſt Excuſe.

The ſum is this. The Complexion, 'tis certain, of every Man's Body hath (naturally and while unſanctified) a very great Influence on our Souls, to draw them to that particular Vice (in an eſpecial manner) which is fitted and accommodated particularly to its frame, and wherewith it ſelf is moſtly delighted. Nor is this any Excuſe for our being ſeduced, becauſe being regenerated by the Grace of God, our Complexion will be new moulded, and may as ſtrongly incline us to the contrary Vertue. Hence therefore (as a predominant

minant Grace, ſo) a predominant Sin, you ſee, may come to rule and govern peculiarly in us.

2. *A predominant Sin may ariſe and reign in us likewiſe, from the diſtinct and particular ways or manner of our Education and Breeding.* For this being the frame of our future Growth, we uſually prove juſt as it works us. And therefore any little Vice, taught and indulg'd in our tender Years (the ſeaſon of our Education) is very apt to ſtick by and govern us as long as we live. If they, who ſhould in our Minority govern us, either ſet us any bad Example themſelves, or ſuffer us to follow them that do, the Contagion, 'tis odds, will always hang about us, and the Habit increaſing with our Years, become *Ours* in a very eminent degree. Any little bruiſe or ſciſure in the young and tender Plant, ſhews it ſelf, we ſee, a great fault and blemiſh when it becomes a full grown Tree. 'Tis the wiſe Man's Advice therefore, upon this Conſideration, that we ſhould *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go,* becauſe, *when he is old he will not depart from it.* Men's Minds in Childhood are much like their Joynts, pliant and tractable, which being diſtorted by any ill accident *then,* will ever, 'tis odds, remain ſo afterwards, and the Deformity much increaſe with their Age and Strength. Prov. 22. 6.

And this methinks (by the by) ſhould be ſufficient caution to all, Parents and others, with whom the Education of Youth is entruſted, carefully and betimes to ſow the ſeed of Vertue in their Souls; leſt, through their neglect, ſome cunning and mercileſs Sin wind it ſelf with their Education into their future Practice, and take a full poſſeſſion of their Hearts; and ſo not only prove their Maſter it ſelf, but draw in more as bad as it ſelf, and never leave the Man (who will hence, ſure,

ſure, have reaſon to curſe his Guardians) till they have hurried him to Perdition, and buried him in the unquenchable Infernal Flames. Again,

3. *Another Ground whence a particular Sin may ſhew it ſelf eminently Ours, may be, poſſibly, our preſent Age, or ſeaſon of Life.* For Sin, commonly, varies its complexion with our Bodies; and that which is predominant in us at one time, may become extinct and quite laid aſide at another. The Appetite changes, we know, with Age; and Sin will change with the Appetite; So that we love and nauſeate, juſt as our ſeaſon of Life prompts us. Thus *Levity* and *Inconſtancy* are obſerv'd to be Vices peculiar to *Childhood*; *Wantonneſs* and *Prodigality* to *Youth*; *Pride* and *Statelineſs* to *Manhood*; *Covetouſneſs* and *Frowardneſs* to *Old Age*. As the Nations, in times of darkneſs, had each of them their particular *Idols*, which they worſhipped alone, and neglected others, (tho they all agreed in diſhonouring *the one only true God*) So every ſtage or ſeaſon of a Sinner's Life, hath it's adored and darling Polution; which tho it expires therewith, yet reigns while that laſts, and is ever ſucceeded by a new Age and Luſt together. For indeed, if the Devil had but one Bait to allure us by, we ſhould, when we had but once paſt over the ſeaſon it was accommodated to, be out of the poſſibility of ſinning any more; the alteration of Age rendring the beloved Sin of the paſt, nauſeous to the preſent ſtate or ſeaſon of our Life. And therefore hath that ſubtile Enemy multiply'd his Snares by the number of our Years, and dogs them in a circuit from one Vanity to another, till Death ſurprize frequently the Preſumer. Thus a new *Deputy* he ſtill ſets up to the Humour of the Times, which (that his Government may never grow

grow uneaſie) he ever continues to change therewith; ſo that there's no *Inter Regnum* in the Kingdom of Darkneſs; one Sin or other is continually enthron'd, which is renew'd and chang'd with the Times, and ſo remains ever belov'd, and the *People's darling*. Again,

4. *A Sin may become peculiar and eminent in us further from our particular Calling, or Profeſſion of Life.* For every Employment is accompanied with its particular Temptation; (the Devil having way-lay'd us in every Path, and hid his Snares for us under every Concern we can apply our ſelves unto) inſomuch that it ſometimes proves hard to leave ſuch a Sin, unleſs we quite forſake the Employment it haunts. The *Merchant* therefore, is moſt of all concern'd to ward off allurements to *Deceit* and *Lying* eſpecially, *Miniſters* to *Flattery*, and *Magiſtrates* to *Bribery* and *Injuſtice*, and the *Souldier* to *Rapine* and *Violence*; theſe becoming, from thoſe their ſeveral Callings, the Sins they ſtand moſt in danger of, and are peculiarly *theirs*, as they are ſo employ'd. Of this laſt therefore, St. *John Baptiſt* had ſo warily obſerv'd this, That being demanded what the *Souldiers* ſhould do, he warns ſuch eſpecially that they ſhould *do Violence to no Man, neither accuſe any falſly, and be content with their Wages*; their Employment addicting them to theſe Sins eſpecially: So that *Violence*, *Revenge*, and *Murmuring*, may juſtly be called the great Sins of the *Camp*, they naturally accompanying that Employment; ſhewing themſelves, (without great, and more than ordinary care) in thoſe eſpecially who are exerciſed therein. And as thus then to our *Callings*; ſo farther, Luke 3. 14.

5. *A predominant Sin may owe no leſs its riſe and greatneſs to our preſent outward State or Condition.* Thus

Thus in *Poverty*, may we obſerve *Envy*, *Rapine*, and *Diſcontent* cry the loudeſt; in *Proſperity*, *Pride*, *Arrogance*, *Oppreſſion* and *Ambition* lord it or'e the reſt. *Pleaſures*, expected or enjoy'd, are apt to thruſt out of the Heart the thoughts of God, and all ſenſe of Goodneſs. And *Wealth* too caſts it ſelf into ſome *Idol* Sin, which we preſently fall down before, and are enſnar'd to worſhip. *Thoſe that will be rich*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition.* Thus, whatever Condition we are in, we ſtill meet with Temptations therein, ſtrongly ſoliciting us to peculiar and proper Sins thereto. Once more, (and to conclude this Head)

6. Laſtly, *Particular Sins may become peculiar and predominant in us alſo, from Cuſtom and long Uſage.* For *Cuſtom*, (being the *Genius*, or Spirit of Action) introduces a Nature, Facility and Delight; ſo that a Sin which can once plead this, hath as ſtrong a Title to us, even as our very Nature it ſelf, and as difficult too to be ſhaken off. *Can the Ethiopian change his* Jer. 13. 23. *Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* (ſaith the Prophet) *then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do Evil.*

Cuſtom introduces an inſeparable Union, and makes the Sin it waits on, not only *Ours*, but we indeed that *Sin's*; for ſo the Scriptures repreſent us, as *Slaves* to ſuch Vices, having *ſold our ſelves to do wickedly*, and being *led Captive by Satan at his pleaſure.* We are not only bound by ſuch Sins, but robb'd likewiſe of all our ſtrength whereby we ſhould break looſe from thoſe Bonds: ſo that we muſt continue to the commiſſion of accuſtomed Sins, upon the very ſame account that the *Hiſtorian* extravagantly ſaid *Cato* was vertuous, *quia aliter*

aliter non potuit, becauſe he could not otherwiſe. Every Repetition of any Action, is like a Blow from the Hammer on the Nail's Head, which the more we multiply, the further is it driven by it, and the harder to wrench out again. *Cuſtom* rivits the Sin to our practice, rendring it thereby ſo peculiarly *ours*, that we ſhall ſcarce ever have the Heart or Reſolution to leave it: Time and Uſe will have ſo bent and enur'd our Inclination towards it, that it becomes as hard to be rectified or turn'd from it, as a Body bowed down by Age, is to be recovered to its youthful ſtreightneſs.

Theſe and the like Temptations then, every Man may find, by a ſmall obſervation of himſelf and others, whereby Peculiar and Reigning Sins (which are the great Obſtructors of our *Uprightneſs before God)* are introduced. Theſe are the Avenues by which the Uſurper enters our Hearts. In ſo many places are we aſſaultable, and lie open to Infernal Malice.

And ſince then it thus appears, *that every Man hath his Peculiar Sin*, and *by what Means*; it is but time that we now proceed to conſider particularly *What is ours*, in order to the *keeping of our ſelves from it*, that we may become *Upright before God:* And this is the Subject of our next General Head; which is,

III. *To conſider how every Man's Own particular Sin may be diſcovered, and diſtinguiſh'd by him from all his other Sins.*

To this end, ſuch *Characteriſticks* as theſe are wont to be given us of it.

1. *The Sin that is peculiarly Ours, we may know by its commanding Power, by its Guards and Attendants.*

A reigning Sin never ſits ſolitary. This great ſciſure in the Soul, like a great Wound in the Body, draws all the bad Humours about it. So that all our other Sins are but Streams emptying themſelves into this Ocean. All are ſubſervient to it, and drudg for it. Thus, for inſtance, in the *Worldly Niggard*, where *Covetouſneſs* reigns, *Lying*, *Deceit*, *Oppreſſion* and *Injuſtice* are ready, upon all occaſions, to act in ſubſerviency to it. And in the *Unclean*, where *Luſt* flames, Conſumption of *Eſtate*, *Body* and *Time* are ready to be caſt in for fuel. Thus the predominant Sin is ever attended by all our other Sins, and therefore, that to which we find our common Sins moſtly directed, and which gives Life and Motion to them, that is our peculiar, our darling, our reigning Sin.

2. *This we may farther diſcover by our eaſineſs to be overcome by it.* We don't find thoſe ſtruglings and relentings in this, which we cannot for our Lives avoid in the commiſſion of other Sins. For all Sin indeed, is uncouth and uneaſy to the Mind of Man at firſt; and there are few Sinners ſo monſtrouſly deprav'd, but they will even yet ſtartle at the Practice of ſome Sins; whereas there are other (and perhaps no leſs heinous) Sins, which they can *drink down like Water*, (as the Scripture phraſes it) with greedineſs and delight at the firſt motion. Thus you may obſerve it with the *Common Swearer*; who poſſibly does abhor the very thought of *Murther*, *Oppreſſion*, or *Covetouſneſs*, and declaim too againſt them as much as any Man; yet ſo eaſily is he induced to (what many other Sinners do as much ſtartle at and abhor) the Prophanation of the holy Name of the great God in *idle Oaths*, that he is (as he himſelf will not rarely confeſs)

Job 15. 16.

confeſs) inſenſible of it, and knows not when he ſwears: And the reaſon is apparently this, This is his reigning Sin, and the ſhame and difficulty which was in it at firſt, is now, by familiarity and cuſtom, quite worn off; but the other Sins which he boggles at, are not his familiars, and therefore remain yet ſtrange and uggly to him. Hence the *Apoſtle* calls this our familiar Sin, in oppoſition to all our other Sins, *The Sin that does ſo eaſily beſet us*, i. e. The Sin we are the moſt prone to, and can commit with the leaſt ſenſe of guilt and ſhame. Such Sins we may certainly apprehend and mark them for our *Own Iniquities*; our eaſineſs to admit them arguing our Acquaintance, our Love and near Relation. But, Heb. 12. 1.

3. *Such Sins may, again, be diſcern'd by our Impatience of any Reproof for them.* There being no ſurer nor ſhorter way of diſcovering the moſt ſecret Affection to any thing, than by ſpeaking ill of the thing beloved. For Love, like the Fire, will be apt to ſparkle upon every diſturbance. No Man will indure to be reprov'd for what he loves. What we hate, or are indifferent toward, we eſteem as alien, and think our ſelves not concern'd for what befalls it; but what we affect and make our Darling, we look upon as part of our very ſelves, and eſpouſe its Concern and Fortune ſo nearly, that a Reproof here reflects upon our ſelves, and does engage us to reſentment. Thus *Herod* could *hear St.* John *the Baptiſt gladly* (as the *Text* informs us) till he preach'd againſt his *Herodias*, and then he could not bear it. We may think therefore, what Sin it is, which we can leaſt of all indure to hear of; which makes us moſt apt to be angry at the Man that reproves it, and that we may conclude is our Beloved,

our Darling and Peculiar Sin. The which we may diſcover, moreover,

4. *By our Deſire and Endeavour to conceal it.* Becauſe what we love and are loth to part with, we are apt to be unwilling to be known we have it. Love hath ever ſo much of Jealouſy, as to affect Privacy. So that if we but then conſider with our ſelves, what Sin it is we are the moſt afraid ſhould be publickly known; which we would not (for the World) be deem'd guilty of; which few or none ſuſpect, and which we endeavour to hide from all; by ſuch our care to keep ſecret, we may eaſily come by the ſure diſcovery of our Darling Luſt. And ſo again, we may diſcover it,

5. *By our readineſs to plead for and excuſe it, by the moſt fair Pretences and plauſible Arguments, upon almoſt any Occaſion.* No Man will be wanting to play the Advocate for what he loves. Every cunning Shift and Deſign are Attendants to *Our* Iniquity. Thus the *Covetous* may we hear extolling *wiſe Frugality* and *good Husbandry*; and the *Luxurious Magnificenee, Pomp* and *Gentility*, only for the ſake of thoſe Darling Vices of theirs, which they ſhape by theſe Vertues. They will ſtill be endeavouring to cover Vice's Deformity with Vertue's Mantle; ſhuffling that under the name of this; calling Vice Vertue, or any thing, rather than part with what they affect. So that but obſerving the tendency and drift of ſuch Mens Diſcourſes, one may eaſily trace out the Beloved Sin, for whoſe ſake they deſign the *Panigyrick.*

6. *This Sin, likewiſe, we may diſcover, by conſidering what Sin it is which above all other, we could wiſh (or be content at leaſt) that it were no Sin.* For all Sin being naturally ſo deform'd and oppoſite to the *Beauty of Holineſs,*

lineſs, it is not poſſible that any thing, but an ardent and peculiar Love, can make any Man boggle to part with it. And therefore, when the *Young Man* in the *Goſpel* (being inform'd of the neceſſity of parting with his Affection to the World, in order to his obtaining Heaven) *went away ſorrowful*; it was doubtleſs, because he was hugely enamor'd with his wide Poſſeſſions, and could heartily have wiſh'd his Love thereto, and hopes of Heaven, conſiſtent with each other; and troubled he was becauſe they were not: *Covetouſneſs*, upon this, appearing to be the Sin he lov'd, his darling Luſt. For had he not been ſtrangely in love with that Vice, he could ne're have deſired it to have been otherwiſe than what it was. And when he ſaw and underſtood ſo poſitively, that he muſt reſolve to part either with *it*, or his *hopes of Salvation*; nothing but a blind and doting Affection could have diſturb'd or delay'd his Reſolution. To wiſh therefore, that ſuch a particular Sin, we might however ſtill love, and live in, without Sin; argues our (more than ordinary) love for it, and it's predominancy over us. Nay, yet farther. Mat. 19. 22.

7. *The Sin that is, in an eſpecial manner, our Own, may yet be diſcover'd by its readineſs to diſtract us moſt in holy Duties.* For our Mind being continually bent towards it, is apt to ſtand ſo, even when we moſt ſtrive to bend it the quite contrary way. A Sin, by being accuſtomarily lov'd, becomes, in fine, even as natural to us, as the quality of Cold to Water: And therefore, as *this* when heated (tho never ſo hot) ſtill is working it ſelf towards its own natural Temper; ſo we, tho never ſo much warm'd by our Devotion, are apt quickly to grow cool again, and when we do ſo, we ever

ever work towards the Sin that is moſt familiar to us. We cannot long continue from our accuſtomed Temper: It will ſtill be working againſt, and chilling all oppoſite Heat and Fervour. That is the Sin, which is *Ours* therefore, which our Hearts work moſt towards, and which diſturbs and diſtracts us moſt in Holy Duties. Once more, (and to conclude)

8. Laſtly, *That Sin which we are apt to think on firſt in the Morning, and laſt in the Evening, is, moreover deem'd, likely enough to be ours.* For our firſt and laſt Thoughts are obſerv'd to diſcover very much of the temper and affection of the Mind. What we love moſt, we uſually make our firſt and laſt; give it entertainment firſt in the Morning, and take our leave of it laſt in the Evening. Thus where the *Love of God* prevails; good Men have experienc'd it working in their Hearts, eſpecially at theſe ſeaſons. *With my*
Iſa.26.9. *Soul,* (ſaith the Prophet *Iſaiah*) *have I deſired thee in the Night, yea with my Spirit within me will I ſeek thee early.* Our Evening and our Morning Thoughts are a Tribute indeed, due only unto God. Every one ought to begin and end the day with him, and offer moſt devoutly both the Morning and the Evening Sacrifices of a Thought (at leaſt) unto him. Thus,
Pſal.139. *When I wake* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *I am ſtill with thee:*
18. And, *by Night on my Bed, I ſought him whom my Soul*
Cant.3.1 *loveth,* ſings the Spouſe in the *Canticles.* God, as he is the *Alpha* and *Omega* in himſelf, ſo ought he to be unto all his People alſo: and whatever therefore does poſſeſs it ſelf of our firſt and laſt Thoughts, *that* uſurps, as it were, the Seat of God, and *exalts* it ſelf in the Soul, *above all that is called God.* It reigns over us inſtead of God; and is moſt notoriouſly therefore, our Predominant and reigning Sin.

Thus,

Thus, by these plain Rules, may one easily be directed to discover and distinguish our Darling, our Bosom, our reigning Sin. Which having once found out, our next concern must be to quit it; abstinence from such Sins being the first step to real Goodness. I haste therefore to my last general Head. Which was,

IV. Lastly. *To shew you the necessity of keeping our selves from such Sins as these, especially, in order to our becoming upright before God.* For tho the Sin you love, possibly, may be but *one*; yea, and that (in your own esteem at least) but a very *little one*; yet is there an Absolute Necessity of your Resolving to part with *it* especially, and above all others; And bending all your Forces against it alone, to try this Method of the *Psalmist*'s, for your becoming *Upright before God.* For, consider,

1. *Tho your Peculiar Lust may, possibly, be but One, yet it is Sin however.* It is a *Transgression* of the most reasonable, just and holy *Law* of God and Religion: And consequently a stain and blemish of our Natures; the reproach of our Reason and Understanding; the disease and deformity of our Souls; the great Enemy of our Peace; the cause of all our Uneasiness, and Fears, and Troubles; yea, and that too, for which even the Son of God was forced to die a most shameful and painful Death, that *it* might not be our Unavoidable Ruine. This is the *least* we can say of *any* Sin: And tho, then, your Sin be but *one*; yet hath it, you see, a monstrous Aspect, and God cannot approve of it, tho but *single*; and we must therefore *keep our selves from it*, before ever he will accept of us as *upright before him.* But,

2. *If*

2. *If the Sin be but one, then you may conſider that 'tis by ſo much the eaſier to part with, and the more reaſonable to relinquiſh it.* He that is bound with a ſtrong *Cable*, or multitude of ſmaller *Cords*, may pretend ſome Neceſſity for his Thraldom from the ſtrength of his Bonds; But he that is tied with *one ſingle Thread*, (ſuch as one Reſolute Struggle would be ſure to break) he is Priſoner only to his own either Sloth or Humour: And who will pity his Captivity, where 'tis ſo apparently his own Choice? Do not therefore ſay, *My Sin is but one, and therefore I need not leave it:* But, *My Sin is but one, therefore I need not keep it.* So ſingle a Pleaſure one may diſpenſe with, and find no great miſs. This ſingle Profit one may reſign, and 'twill be no breach in one's Eſtate. And if my Saviour hath required a Renunciation of *all* my multitude of Sins, tho never ſo dear, ſhall I ſcruple to renounce *one*, and that in my *own* eſteem but a very ſmall one? Nay,

3. *We may yet argue higher, and from the ſingleneſs and ſmallneſs of the Sin, deduce the inhancement of the Guilt.* Great Acquiſitions carry ſome Temptation in their face, but deſpicable Prizes do rather avert than tempt. 'Twas therefore the ſign of a *Common Harlot* to be *hired with a Kid*, Gen. 38. 17. And ſure he muſt be of a ſtrange proſtitute Soul, that can adulterate for ſuch low, trivial Wages. To diſhonour God, tho the *whole World* were to be *gained* by it, were great Impiety; but to do it for *handfuls of Barley*, and *pieces of Bread* (upon ſuch trivial inconſiderable terms) himſelf brands as a yet higher pitch of Prophaneneſs, *Ezek.* 13. 19. And ſure, it argues a very light eſteem of God, indeed, when one poor, contemptible Luſt ſhall be able to over-poize *him* in our Hearts. Like wretched

Judas,

Judas, this is to betray our Lord for a contemptible Piece. A Smile, a Word prevails more than the Love and Bounty of our Creator: And do we not then deſerve to periſh? Nor,

4. *Is the Folly leſs than the Prophaneneſs.* For the moſt Doting Affection, when 'tis ſumm'd up, can amount to no more than this, *viz.* That it makes a Man expoſe himſelf to the greateſt Pain, and the greateſt Loſs, for the thing Beloved. And this is moſt viſible here; Hell being certainly acquir'd, and Heaven as certainly forfeited by *one* Sin as by *many*. And then, tho there may be odds in other reſpects, yet what is there in this, between us more modeſt, and the moſt Licentious Sinners, but that *We* put the very ſame value upon *one*, which the *other* do put upon *many* Sins? Which renders our Folly but ſo much more apparently the greater, becauſe we ſell our Souls ſo much the cheaper. Let Men pretend then, what they will, in extenuation of their *Boſom Sin*; that they are not ſo prophane as many others; that they neither have ſo *many* nor ſo *great* Sins to anſwer for as their Neighbours; that ſetting aſide, poſſibly, ſome one fooliſh Cuſtom they have took up and are addicted to, they can challenge all the World to accuſe them of any; they denying themſelves in moſt of the Sins, they can ſee others *commit with greedineſs*: yet (notwithſtanding all this) ſo long as they harbour but *one* Beloved Sin, they are certainly as miſerably cheated in their bargain as others, and are no leſs guilty of the moſt egregious Madneſs. For, 'tis apparent all the Love which other Men ſcatter and diſtribute upon *ſeveral*, they have united and concenter'd in this *One* Luſt.

And when then, the parting with *one* Sin might ſave their Souls, ſurely 'tis a doting Paſſion indeed that will make Men hazard their *Salvation* for it. Alas! if our Sin be but *One*, let us never be ſo fooliſh, ſo ſtark mad as to be damn'd for it: To make *it* the price of *all* thoſe *Pleaſures which are at God's Right-hand for ever-more:* Of that *Fulneſs of Joy*, which *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor* ever yet *enter'd into the Heart of Man* fully *to conceive.* But ſince it is but *One*, let us never be ſo rediculouſly fond as to be undone for a Trifle; but with the upright *Pſalmiſt*, reſolve rather to endeavour, henceforward, to *keep our ſelves* carefully *from* it. And that, more eſpecially, becauſe,

5. *Tho it be but One, yet it is the moſt malignant and miſchievous one that can be harbour'd.* There's no Sin among the whole maſs of Vice, which we have more reaſon to relinquiſh than our peculiar Sin, becauſe none is capable to do us more Miſchief. And that,

(1.) *Becauſe this we have made our intimate, and have not that Jealouſy over it, which we can have over other Sins.* This is our Boſom Intimate, is got into our own Quarters, ſhuffled with our own Forces, entred our Holds and Defences; and mixes in all our Counſels, having full power of our Affections, and therefore may eaſily do us the moſt injury; it being obſerved that the Riſque is ever the greateſt when the Foe is thus, *Rebel* and *Traitor* too. *A falſe Friend is certainly the worſt Enemy:* And therefore, when the Heathen Man prayed unto *Jupiter* to *ſave him from his Enemies*; one that over-heard him did, not impertinently ſure, mend it with a more needful Prayer, *viz.* That *Jupiter* would *ſave him from his Friends.* He rightly thought

thought that *they* might do him more harm, becauſe he *truſted* them; but as for his Enemies, he would be ſure to look to himſelf, for receiving Injury from them. 'Tis the Sin which lurks in our Boſom, and which we make but too much our Familiar, which we had need moſt to beware of, as not having a more ſpiteful Enemy than it, becauſe a falſe Friend. For farther,

(2.) *'Tis this very Sin alone, which is the greateſt Obſtacle to our thorow Reformation.* 'Tis here the work ſticks and can go no farther. 'Tis the *plucking out the right Eye*, and *cutting off the right Hand*, (a rending out Luſt as dear to us as the moſt neceſſary Member we have) that makes the Terms of Salvation ſo *hard a ſaying*. 'Tis eaſie to be good, ſo far as we have no Inclination to thwart; but all the difficulty of *Converſion* lies in *Self-denial*, which is a kind of αὐτοχειρία [*Self-Murther*] which we naturally abhor and dread the thoughts of. Thus the Young Man in the Goſpel tells our Saviour, that he had *kept all the Commandments from his Youth*; yet when our Lord requir'd moreover, the parting of him and his Boſom Sin, ſaying, *One thing thou lackeſt, Go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the Poor,* — and *come and take up thy Croſs and follow me*; here he ſticks, being *ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved, for he had great Poſſeſſions.* His inordinate love for the things of the World (which was *his* Iniquity) was the Sin that baſled his Converſion. This therefore, we muſt eſpecially beware of, as being the fatal Rock we all ſplit upon, that miſcarry in our Voyage to Eternity. Tho therefore, the Sin be but *one*, yet it is the *only one* that hinders our Converſion, and is therefore the moſt carefully of Mark 10. 20.

all others, to be avoided and oppos'd by us. For farther,

(3.) *While we retain and harbour it, 'tis certain all our Religion is rendred vain and worthleſs by it.* It taints all the Good we do, and renders all that *little* Religion we pretend to, but a maimed, deformed thing; hateful to God, and as uncomfortable to our ſelves, as to be without a Leg or an Arm. St. *James's Aphoriſm* holds in this caſe, *James* 2. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point only, he is guilty of all.* He that allows himſelf to break *one* Precept, keeps *none*; but will be reckoned guilty of thoſe things which he does not commit. For tho his Sin may be but one, yet it is contrary to that ſincere Holineſs, which God hath indiſpenſibly enjoyn'd us; and his ſparing of *that*, does evidence his hatred againſt the *reſt* to be falſe and pretended only. For God hath not given any Man Authority to pick and chooſe his Duties, or to leave and ſpare a Vice, becauſe 'tis one he particularly loves. He that does ſo, altho he live never ſo careful and ſevere a Life in other reſpects, yet all his *Uprightneſs* comes, in reality, only to this, *viz.* He hath a Mind to but one Sin; and thoſe Sins he cares not for, he forbears; but this one he hath a mind to, that he commits. And is not God then (think we) mightily beholden to him, that there is but one way of provoking that does take with him; and therefore, he muſt allow him what he hath an Inclination to, and pardon him becauſe he abſtains from what he does not like?

The voice of *Obedience* is, that we *keep all the Commandments*, and the language of *Repentance*, that we

depart

depart from all Iniquity; and therefore all the Vertues in the World, cannot waſh off the Guilt of one unrepented Sin. *Shall I give my firſt-born for my Tranſgreſſion* (ſaith the Prophet) *the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* Shall I bring my Alms, my Devotion, my Tears; nay, all the Good that ever I have done? All, alas! will vaniſh at the Guilt of one Sin, and melt before it, as Wax before the Sun. For every Sin is, as *Seneca* call'd *Alexander*'s murthering *Caliſthenes*, *Crimen Æternum*, an everlaſting Sin, which no Vertue of our own (without a full, compleat Repentance) can ever redeem. *One* Fly is ſufficient to taint the whole Box of ſweet Ointment. And what a pity is it, and cruelty to our ſelves (ſince we have not, God knows! any of us, much true Goodneſs to boaſt of) to taint and fruſtrate the *little* we have, rendring that utterly inſignificant, which at the beſt, amounts to ſo little? We muſt therefore, beware of harbouring, tho but *one* beloved Sin; becauſe, this *One* (of ſo miſchievous a Nature is it) will ſpoil and fruſtrate all the Good we have, or pretend to. Nay, Mic. 6.7.

(4.) *This one Beloved Sin, tho but one, yet will it moreover, if we do not part with it, obſtruct, grieve, and at laſt drive away the good Spirit of God from us.* For that is an *Holy* Spirit, and where *it* is ſuffered to have its kindly operation, it hath ever its *Fruit unto Holineſs*, uniformly ſupreſſing *all* Sin; and therefore, where any *one* continues in force and vigor, 'tis manifeſt that ſuch operation of Grace is obſtructed: And where 'tis obſtructed long, thence it is next of all withdrawn. For, *my Spirit* (ſaith the Almighty) *ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.* The pure Spirit of God Gen. 6.3.

God cannot dwell in *a Soul that is ſubject to Sin.* It can endure no ſuch Inmate: They can no more dwell together, than Light with Darkneſs. For Chriſt to dwell, by his Spirit, in any Heart that cheriſheth a Vice, were for him again (as one expreſſes it) to *deſcend into Hell.* Therefore, by harbouring any Sin, we reſiſt the Grace of God; and by refuſing to let Chriſt rule entirely in our Hearts, we put our ſelves at once out of his Government and Protection; having all thoſe ſpiritual Aids withdrawn, which ſhould either aſſiſt us to Good, or fortify us againſt Ill; and like Out-law'd Perſons, are conſequently expoſed to the mercileſs Out-rage of every Fury-Luſt that will aſſault us. For herein appears farther, the miſchief of harbouring, tho but *one* Boſom Sin; that, tho it be but *One.* Yet,

(5.) *It is apt to multiply and produce many more.* For Vice is always teeming and very fruitful; and tho there be no *Bleſſing* annex'd to it, yet it does ſtrangely *increaſe and multiply.* As there is a Connexion of one Vertue with another, ſo Vices are linked together; and one Sin draws many after it. When the Devil tempts a Man to commit any Wickedneſs, he does as it were lay a long *Train* of Sins; and if the firſt Temptation take, they give fire to one another. All Vice ſtands upon a Precipice; and to engage in any ſinful Courſe, is to run down the Hill, and then no Man can ſtop himſelf when he pleaſes. 'Tis a fond thing for any to think to ſet bounds to himſelf in any thing that is bad; To reſolve to ſin in number, weight and meaſure; That he will entertain only this *one* Sin, and bar out all the reſt: Alas! our Corrupt Hearts put once into a ferment,

ment, tho but by one Sin, yet are they like the *Raging Sea*, to which we can *ſet noBounds*, nor ſay, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further. One* Sin, tho never ſo little, in the Heart, hath full power to call in what company it liſts: 'Tis like thoſe little Thieves, which being put in at the Window, ſet the Doors open to all the reſt. For the ſame reaſon may be equally inducive to all Sin; As the repulſed Vices may otherwiſe complain juſtly of great partiality, when as bad as themſelves are ſtill ſpar'd and cheriſh'd; ſo this points them out a way to attaque us more proſperouſly: For let them ſhape themſelves but to our Humour, put on the Countenance of our Beloved Sin, and they need not doubt of as free an admiſſion.

Thus unhappy is the Caſe of him who entertains any *one* darling Sin; his Encloſure is broken down, and he lies then common; He is left deſtitute of a reply to any Temptation, and like a baſhful Perſon, will be in danger of yielding, becauſe he is aſham'd to deny. And ſure then, this unhappy fruitfulneſs of Sin may be a ſtrong Evidence of the Neceſſity lying upon us all to run away from *every* Sin; and dread to retain any *one* evil Spirit, as that which may bring in upon us *many more worſe than it ſelf.* Which, tho it ſhould fail to do; we (beyond all expectation) continue in one poſture (hugging but our *one* Boſom Sin) and not be tempted to grow worſe, yet we may conclude, 'tis becauſe Satan finds we need it not; And we have little reaſon ſure to be proud of that Vertue, which the Devil himſelf will allow us; Or to think our ſelves good enough, when we are as bad as he wiſhes us. For,

(6.) *This one beloved Sin is ſufficient, even by its own ſingle weight, to ſink us into Eternal Perdition.* One Wound may be as mortal to the Soul, as it proves oft to the Body. A Tempeſt is not always neceſſary to ſink the Ship; One treacherous Leak may do it in the greateſt Calm. Our Adverſary well knows that while he holds any part, God will have none, and ſo the whole falls to him of courſe. Therefore can he permit Men, we ſee, not only to caſhier ſome one ſingle Sin, but whole ſholes together, and yet not fear the ſinking of his Intereſt in us. He may truſt us, even as far as he did that Young Man in the *Goſpel*, who was pronounc'd *not far from the Kingdom of God*; and yet ſo long as there is but any *one* unmortify'd Luſt that may *ſend* us away *ſad* from Chriſt, his Tenure will remain firm enough. And this indeed, is the Devil's main advantage, that he can hold faſt by the ſmalleſt Thred. And whereas to our Bliſs, a Conſpiration and Union of all Vertues is required; Our Ruine may ſpring from any *one* ſolitary Crime. Many Rounds make that Ladder whereby we ſcale Heaven, whereas one ſtep ſerves to precipitate us into the Abyſs of Hell. Any *one* Sin therefore, gives us into the poſſeſſion of Satan, and leaves us at his will and pleaſure, to be led away finally to Deſtruction.

Thus Unhappy it is in the power of any one indulged Sin to make us; If appearing, upon all theſe accounts, to be the moſt malignant and miſchievous one that can be harboured; and the greateſt Obſtacle to our becoming *upright before God*; So that if we have any love for our ſelves, any deſire for our ſpiritual intereſt, we cannot but charge our ſelves with care to

keep

keep our ſelves from it. Much more might the Love of God conſtrain us, becauſe (which may ſerve as a further Evidence of the Neceſſity of our quitting theſe Sins eſpecially.)

6. *Be they never ſo dear, we ſhould part with them the rather, becauſe the greater inſtance it will be of our Love and Sincerity towards God.* The offering of our Darling *Iſaac* is a moſt ſignal Inſtance of Divine Love; *Now,* ſays God to *Abraham, I know thou loveſt me, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thy only Son from me.* To part with Sins we care not for, is only an Inſtance of Self-love; but to deny Self for another's ſake, evidences true love for him. And who then, that hath any ſpark of Chriſtianity left in him, would not be forward to ſhew as much love as ever he can towards God; who hath always been, and ſtill is daily expreſſing ſo much Love, in innumerable Inſtances, towards him? Let the Sin therefore be never ſo dear; the dearer it is, the greater inſtance will it be of our loving God, to *keep our ſelves from it,* in obedience to his Command, that we may become *upright before him.* And indeed, if we would have God believe that we are ſincere in loving him, we can do no leſs than give him the Precedency in our Affections. However (to conclude all) if there be no Ambition of Love to allure; yet, it may be, there may be ſome fear of Wrath to affright us from ſuch Sins. Therefore ſeriouſly conſider, Gen. 22. 12.

7. Laſtly; *How dear each darling Luſt is like to coſt us if* (after all that hath been now ſaid to evidence the neceſſity of our leaving it) *we will ſtill keep it.* Send up your Thoughts into yonder Regions above, and view well that *fulneſs of Joy,* thoſe *Pleaſures that are at*

God's right-hand for evermore; and tell me what Sin (tho never ſo palatable) can recompence the loſs thereof? Nay, caſt down your Looks into that *Bottomleſs-Pit* of Horror; where you ſee there that multitude of Souls ſtretched upon the Rack of Deſpair; the *never-dying Worm* gnawing and feeding upon their Vitals, and the great *God of Mercy laughing*, without Mercy, *at their* endleſs *Calamity:* Mark whence you hear thoſe diſmal Shrikes and Groans, thoſe blaſphemous Curſings, that dolorous *weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth*; and ſoberly conſider, if you can be content to ſhare for ever in theſe (and ten thouſand times ten thouſand more Miſeries than I can tell you of) for the nauſeous Embraces of a treacherous Luſt? What is there, (good God!) in any *Boſom Sin*, that can tempt us to part with the Joys of Heaven, and incur the Pains of Hell ſo willingly? What is there in this *Idoliz'd* Sin of *ours*, which ſhould exact ſuch coſtly Sacrifices? Would it not be eaſier, and more our Intereſt too, to part with any Sin, rather than Heaven? To endure the ſhort Agonies of a Revulſion of the deareſt Luſt from our Hearts, than the horrid Diſpair of a *Damned Ghoſt* for ever? To thwart a fooliſh and unreaſonable Inclination, than lie roaring, to Eternity, upon the Rack of a Revenging Conſcience? Is there, really, any proportion between our abſtaining from *the Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a moment*, and our being excluded thoſe of Heaven, and all hopes of Happineſs for ever? Alas! If it be hard and difficult to contend now with one evil Habit; to ſtruggle with one ſtiff and obſtinate Inclination; how ſevere will it prove *to dwell with Everlaſting Burnings*, and ſuffer the

the dire Effects of an Unappeasable Vengeance to all Eternity?

Wherefore, since we are under an absolute necessity of enduring the one or the other; let us, in the Name of God, act like Men, and of the two Evils, chuse that which is most tolerable. Let us throw *aside* (tho with never so great difficulty and pain) *the Sin*, especially, *that does so easily beset us*. Let us (without the least Mercy and Pity to our selves) tear it out from the closest Embraces of our Inclinations: And, (that we may not only evidence, but most effectually and speedily render our selves sincere and *Upright before God*, and so escape the Miseries reserv'd as a Portion for all *Hypocrisy*) let us, with the *Psalmist*, resolutely and diligently, henceforth, *keep our selves*, especially, from *Our* Iniquity.

Which God grant we may all of us successfully accomplish, for the Sake and Merits of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, *&c.*

FINIS.

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